IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-32 without prejudice or disclaimer, and substitute new claims 33-64 therefor as follows:

Claims 1-32 (Cancelled).

33. (New) A method for giving to at least one user access to a respective home operator over a communication network, access being via an access network and through any of a plurality of supported visited networks, comprising the step of forwarding to the at least one user a list of said supported visited networks, whereby said at least one user is given the possibility of selecting one of said supported visited networks as the path for reaching said respective home operator.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, comprising the steps of:

receiving from said at least one user, user credentials at said access network;

forwarding said user credentials to an authentication function at said access network;

retrieving a set of available roaming networks for said at least one user, thus retrieving a list of operators holding a roaming agreement with said respective home operator of said at least one user; and

forwarding said list to said at least one user.

35. (New) The method of claim 34, comprising the steps of:

receiving from said at least one user at said authentication function an identifier of an operator selected from said list; and

forwarding to the operator identified by said identifier a user's authentication request.

36. (New) The method of claim 35, comprising the step of including the user credentials in said user's authentication request.

37. (New) The method of claim 33, comprising the steps of:

assigning to said at least one user an NAI identifier; and

identifying said at least one user through the realm part of said NAI identifier.

38. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein said steps of receiving and forwarding user credentials and retrieving a set of available roaming networks is performed only once, when a first authentication request is received by said authentication function in respect to a user for which no direct roaming agreements exist with said user's respective home operator.

39. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein, when said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home operator, comprising the step of forwarding to said at least one user a list including said user's respective home operator only.

40. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein, when said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home operator, comprising the step of directly forwarding the user's authentication request to said user's respective home operator.

41. (New) The method of claim 35, comprising the step of proxying said user's authentication request from said operator identified by said identifier to said user's respective home operator.

42. (New) The method of claim 34, comprising the step of selecting said authentication function as an EAP based function.

43. (New) The method of claim 33, comprising the step of including in at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks a Diameter node.

44. (New) The method of claim 33, comprising the step of including in at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks a proxy/relay agent.

45. (New) The method of claim 33, comprising the step of including in at least one of said supported visited networks, a redirect agent.

46. (New) The method of claim 35, comprising the step of including in at least one of said supported visited networks:

a proxy/relay agent for those authentication requests that must be forwarded toward an identified operator; and

as a redirect agent for those authentication requests that have an unknown realm.

47. (New) The method of claim 46, comprising the steps of:

redirecting to all said supported visited networks the authentication requests whose realm does not correspond to any realm identified at said access network; and

returning from said supported visited networks to said access network redirect notifications as well as contact information to said user's respective home operator.

48. (New) A communication network arranged for giving to at least one user access to a respective home operator via an access network and through any of a plurality of supported visited networks, said access network being configured for forwarding to the at least one user a list of said supported visited networks, whereby said at least one user is given the possibility of selecting one of said supported visited networks as the path for reaching said respective home operator.

49. (New) The network of claim 48, wherein

said access network has an associated authentication server, said access network being configured for receiving user credentials from said at least one user and forwarding said user credentials to said authentication server,

said authentication server being configured for retrieving a set of available roaming networks for said at least one user, thus retrieving a list of operators holding a roaming agreement with said respective home operator of said at least one user, and forwarding said list to said at least one user.

50. (New) The network of claim 49, wherein said authentication server is configured for receiving from said at least one user an identifier of an operator selected from said list, and forwarding to the operator identified by said identifier a user's authentication request.

51. (New) The network of claim 50, wherein said authentication server is configured for including the user credentials in said user's authentication request.

52. (New) The network of claim 48, wherein said at least one user is identified by an NAI identifier and said access network is configured for identifying said at least one user through the realm part of said NAI identifier.

53. (New) The network of claim 49, wherein said authentication server is configured for receiving and forwarding user credentials and retrieving a set of available roaming networks only once, when a first authentication request is received by said authentication server in respect to a user for which no direct roaming agreements exist with said user's respective home operator.

54. (New) The network of claim 49, wherein said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home operator and said access network is configured for forwarding to said at least one user a list including said user's respective home operator only.

55. (New) The network of claim 49, wherein said access network has a direct roaming agreement with said user's respective home operator and said access network is configured for directly forwarding the user's authentication request to said user's respective home operator.

56. (New) The network of claim 50, wherein aid supported visited networks are configured for proxying said user's authentication request from said operator identified by said identifier to said user's respective home operator.

57. (New) The network of claim 49, wherein said authentication server is an EAP based server.

58. (New) The network of claim 48, wherein at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks is configured as a Diameter node.

59. (New) The network of claim 48, wherein at least one of said access network and said supported visited networks includes a proxy/relay agent.

60. (New) The network of claim 48, wherein at least one of said supported visited networks comprises a redirect agent.

61. (New) The network of claim 50, wherein at least one of said supported visited networks comprises:

a proxy/relay agent for those authentication requests that must be forwarded toward an identified operator; and

as a redirect agent for those authentication requests that have an unknown realm.

62. (New) The network of claim 61, wherein said access network is configured for redirecting to all said supported visited networks, the authentication requests whose realm does not correspond to any realm identified at said access network, said supported visited networks being configured for returning to said access network redirect notifications as well as contact information to said user's respective home operator.

63. (New) The network of claim 48, in the form of an IP network.

64. (New) A computer program product capable of being loadable in the memory of at least one computer and including software code portions for performing the steps of any one of claims 33 to 47.